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THE PLAYERS SCOURGE:

OR A DETECTION OF

The ranting prophanity and regnant impiety of ſtage plays, and their wicked encouragers and frequenters; and eſpecially againſt the nine prophane Pagan Prieſts, falſely called miniſters of the goſpel, who countenanced the thrice curſed tragedy called *Douglas*.

By the Rev. Adam Gibb, Edinburgh.

AMONGST the many great and grievous ſins and inares which prevail in this day, the wicked and deviliſh deverſions of the ſtage are greatly increaſing, and more encouraged than ever in this place, to the great diſgrace of Chriſtianity and of all that is ſacred.

Were the perſons who pretend to be miniſters and magiſtrates acting up to their character, it would be their endeavour, as it is their bound duty, to extirpate all wickedneſs out of their juriſdictions, and to be a terror to theſe imps of Satan, and actors of his devices the players. Many famous councils, ſtates and republics, as well Popiſh as Proteſtant, have accounted the ſtage Satan's ſchool, the ſeminary of the devil, and a nurſery for hell, which

Beelzebub

Beelzebub hath ever claimed as his own chief reſidence and rendezvous in the world, over which he ſuperintends, and in which the actions practiſed are by his ſpecial command and ſuggeſtion. In like manner it is agreed on by ſober Pagans themſelves, that play-actors are the moſt profligate wretches, and the vileſt vermine, that hell ever vomited out; that they are the filth and garbage of the earth, the ſcum and ſtain of human nature, the excrements and refuſe of all mankind, the peſts and plagues of human ſociety, the debauchers of mens minds and morals, unclean beaſts, idolatrous Papiſts or atheiſts, and the moſt horrid and abandoned villains that ever the ſun ſhone upon; and therefore have baniſhed, extruded and exterminated them out of their cities and communities; yea the laws of our own land, defective as they are at preſent, have declared theſe land-louping villains impudent ſturdy-beggars, and idle vagabond raſcals: ſo that, would theſe called rulers act up either to their own laws, or the example of the very heathens, they would order the playhouſe in the Canongate, which hath not even the pretence of human authority, to be forthwith demoliſhed, and razed to the foundation, and the very place where it is built to be ſalted with brimſtone, in abhorrence of the abominations that have been committted there: and as theſe vile miſcreants, Diggs, Heyman, Younger, Lewis, Love, Ryder, Holland, and the reſt of Satan's artificers, who now act jugler plays there, have often blaſphemed God with their mouths, and debauched their own and others bodies, it were a great mercy to themſelves, and a favour to the ſociety among whom they are, to cut the tongues out of their heads, and the ——— from between their feet, that they may not henceforth have it in their power to blaſpheme their Maker, nor pollute their fellow creatures; and that they may for ever be diſtinguiſhed from honeſt men, their faces ſhould be marked with a burning iron, and they ſent back to their native lands of England and Ireland, whence the moſt of our wickedneſs proceeds.

Moreover, the prime ſupporters of theſe deviliſh, helliſh ſtage-plays, and of all other wickedneſs in the

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place, being the idle, looſe, uſeleſs catives falſely called nobility and gentry, and eſpecially thoſe called judges and lawyers, to the great diſgrace of their birth, education, offices and employments, it were highly neceſſary and very honourable in thoſe who gave them their honours, offices and employments, to diveſt them of theſe till they abandon Satan's camp, and give evidence of their ſincere repentance: and (if as indeed conſidering the times, this cannot be expected) may we not hope, that all who have any fear of God will forbear employing thoſe who attend the ſtage, and ſo do what is in their power to incapacitate them from making ſuch a ſinful uſe of money? conſidering further, that the ordinary haunters and frequenters of the playhouſe are, of men, the idle, prophane, godleſs, graceleſs and brutiſh rakes, reprobates and panders for hell; and of women none but idle vagueing jilts, light cocquettes, ſtrumpets, whores, bauds, and vile meretrixes, who have thus in effect renounced their baptiſm, their creed, their Chriſtianity, their bible and their God, and liſted themſelves under Satan's banner, giving up even with their ſobriety, humanity, chaſtity, honour and honeſty. It were pity if any who are called miniſters of the goſpel, who know the impoſſibility of partaking of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils, ſhall hereafter admit theſe ſoul-murdering, inconſiſtent wretches to ſealing ordinances, or other church privileges, until they ſhall give evidence of their unfeigned humiliation and ſorrow for their apoſtaſy.

But, alas! the far worſt is yet to come. Was it ever heard of in Scotland, a land which hath often renounced the devil and all his pomps, that the miniſters of the goſpel wrote jugler plays, and attended the ſtage, until theſe falſe brethren, *viz.* John Home at Athelſtaneford, Alexander Carlyle at Muſſelburgh, J——n White at Liberton, Matthew Dyſart at Eccles, William Home at Polwarth, Francis S——t at W——r, George Cupples at Swinton, John Steel at S——r, and Adam Ferguſon Chaplain to lord John Murray's regiment, lately choſen by thoſe black-birds the faculty of advocates to be the keeper of

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their library, did it? Now concerning this unhallowed number, it might be obſerved in general, that they were intruded upon their charges by the force of Popiſh patronages; all of them ride upon the top of the kirk, and lead on in all their black meaſures; all of them ſhew by their light behaviour and ſupine negligence in the diſcharge of their office, that their profeſſion of the miniſtry is, in groſs, hypocriſy, and for a piece of bread; and all theſe have by reſorting to, and haunting Satan's accurſed jugler plays and routs, contemned their ſacred callings, grieved all in whom any ſpark of piety remains, and hardned a prophane, mad and diſtracted generation. But becauſe they deſerve a more glaring ſtigma, we obſerve more particularly,

That the chief ring-leader in all this black work is Jock Home, remarkable for his lightneſs, madneſs, impudence, prophanity, impiety, ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, contempt of his ſuperiors, neglecting, and oft deſerting, his poor people, and infecting them with the huſks of error and prophanity, which has made moſt of them as wicked as himſelf, oppreſſing and calumniating of miniſters and others who retain any meaſure of integrity; wenching, dancing, gaming, drinking, waſtery: and that, like his maſter Satan, he may involve others in the ſame miſery with himſelf, he hath wrote, and cauſed to be acted and publiſhed, his curſed play called DOUGLAS, which, for its prayers to and for the dead, ſwearing by the moſt bleſſed croſs, by the heavens, yea, as is lately proven, (though the printed copy conceals it) by him who died on the accurſed tree to ſave mankind, *&c.* its imprecations, appeals, ſelf-murdering principles; his doctrine of a neceſſity of ſinning, and ſo making God the author of ſin, and other blaſphemies, exceeds the wickedneſs of idolatrous Papiſts and Pagans. To excuſe his wickedneſs, we have been told that this apoſtate play-hunter makes his boaſt that the prince of Wales, the dukes of Cumberland and Argyle, and Mr Pelt, *&c.* take him by the hand: but though this were true, while others deny it, he may reſt aſſured that though all the rakes great and ſmall in the three kingdoms were to take him by the hand; and let him likewiſe

wiſe take in the aſſiſtance of the tyrant of France, the tyger of Savoy, the witch of Endor, with her daughters the bloody witches of Hungary and Lapland, yet they will never be able to ſcreen him from the leaſt drop of the Mediator's vengeance, whoſe authority he hath contemned; but that woe pronounced againſt the man by whom offence cometh will purſue him until his name be made a curſe and an execration upon the face of the earth, for a beacon to all poſterity, unleſs he ſpeedily fly to God for mercy.

Curl-de deſerves the next place, being an ignorant, empty, frothy, fooliſh, light mountebank, who ſcarce acknowledges God out of the pulpit, either in his family or elſewhere, entertains his people with reading a ballad of other mens compoſing, which is the more intolerable that he culls out ſuch ſermons as are moſt ſtuffed with Arminianiſm, and therewith intermixes paſſages from plays. He ſcarce hath the form of viſiting and catechiſing his pariſh; or if at any time he does it, he makes uſe of a catechiſm. He is quite remiſs in diſcipline, admits all to the ſacraments who will but claim that privilege, connives at adultery in his own pariſh, and keeps company with the perſons reputed guilty, and lets baudy language paſs without a check; ſpends the whole ſabbath, except the ſhort time he is in the kirk, with viſiting the gentry, or gallanting the ladies; is a great frequenter of routs and other public entertainments, at which he drinks exceſſively, dances unweariedly, and calls for prophane ſongs, as De'il ſtick the miniſter, and the like; plays at cards both for money and pleaſure; is an open reſorter to rehearſals and plays, a conſorter with that vile meretrix Sarah Ward, and the other comedians, and a great daubler with, and encourager of, thoſe who write and ſet forth curſed ſtage-plays; on all which accounts he is the darling of the whole malignants in the place, many of whom appear openly in his defence, while yet they abhor thoſe with whom he holds communion, being themſelves of the Epiſcopal, or none.

Wh-te, *alias* Black, doth anxiouſly tread the ſame path: he not only connives at all the wickedneſs committed in the pariſh, but is ſhrewdly ſuſpected of being

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the father of the baſtard brats begotten in his own houſe, and poiſons his people with heterodoxy; but being an ignorant blockhead, a dumb idle drone, and ſo lazy that he hath compared the pleaſant, the honourable work of the miniſtry to carrying the ſtone-barrow, he is not capable of ſo much miſchief as either of the two above named ramblers are.

The pitiful body D[illegible]t deſerves the next place in this cabal, being more taken up with fidling, flinging, dancing and training up his children in thoſe wicked amuſements, than with preaching; adventures to the pulpit without a bible, and yet dare ſcarce lift his head off his ballad; an ignorant, hen-picked, cowardly, beaſtly animal; a contented cuckold; carried his whole family to the playhouſe; and one who allows himſelf to be dragged where-ever his imperious wife and m---ous daughters will have him. *exercitious*

H[illegible]e in P[illegible]t, an airy, proud, ſwaggering blade, C[illegible]les, that prophane, brauling, fighting, light mountebank, and S[illegible]l, a frothy fool, fitter indeed for a ſtage than a pulpit, muſt be kept all on one ſtring, becauſe, if the current report of the country be true, they are eſpecially fond of drinking, dancing and whoring together; and to them all conjunctly H——'s maid is ſaid to have brought forth two bumpkin gytlings at one birth; and ſince ſhe affirms they all had ado with her, it is but juſt they ſhould all pay her largely, equally and punctually: accordingly the whore calls on all the kittle three to be exact in their payment, certifying them that the perſon who fails ſhall be publicly expoſed, and the brats laid down at his door, which makes the guilty brotherhood as prompt in their payment to her as they are to the vagabond juglers.

S[illegible]l in S[illegible]r, though of a grave countenance, is noted for a pedantic, fooliſh, flory; a conſtant companion of the prophane and graceleſs; a great drunkard, and therefore was eaſily prevailed on to attend the playhouſe; and pretended to be ſo fooliſh as to expect he could be aſſiſted by the doctrine of devils taught there how to inſtruct his people; though at other times he avows, that they being only coalliers are not worth any man's pains or ſtudy.

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Ferguſon is left to bring up the rear, though he rather deſerves the van, being a more avowed deiſt, play-hunter, and companion to the wicked, than any of the former; a bold defender of, and champion for the ſtage, and a vile blaſphemer and maligner of our Lord and his apoſtles in his paſquil called The morality of the ſtage, as hath been clearly proved againſt him in ſeveral pamphlets lately publiſhed.

When theſe abandoned wretches had thus exerted themſelves for the ſupport of Satan's kingdom, to the everlaſting contempt and diſgrace of all religion, morality and decency, to the utter ruin and perdition of themſelves and others, it might have been expected that if any ſpark of God's fear had remained with the preſbyteries whereof they are members, they would immediately have conveened, and deprived them of any further opportunity of diſgracing their ſacred character, and polluting the pulpit; but no ſteps have been taken with the moſt, and any little thing that hath been done by the reſt hath been no better than Eli's velvet-mouth'd reproof to his ſons. The presbyteries of Edinburgh and Dalkeith began tolerably; the one in advertiſing the other presbyteries of the offence given by their brethren, and calling White to account; and the other for putting a libel into Carlyle's hand: but what hindered them that they did no more? why did theſe two presbyteries confine their inquiry to the ſtage-play? why did Edinburgh presbytery overlook Ferguſon, and their own brethren Wallace, Cumming, W——t and H——n, who, 'tis ſaid, went to the plays in London? why did they ſuſpend White only for a month, and recommend to W——n, who intimated the ſham ſentence, to uſe their dear brother White gently? which he did with a witneſs, behaving in ſuch a way as if he had come to recommend him to his people as more deſerving of their favour: and why did the presbytery of Dalkeith, after finding Carlyle's libel both relevant and fully proven, diveſt themſelves of the power of cenſuring him given them by laws religious and civil, and refer the matter to the ſynod, who probably will only ſhave the head they ſhould cut off? and why did they

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refuſe to read informations given in to them by C——le's elders of his negligence and immoral practices? Theſe things may convince all men that the presbyteries now named are either unwilling or unable to do their duty, and poſſibly they are both: and as for the presbyteries of H——n, A——r and the M——ſe, no better than a total overlooking of the matter was expected from them; the whole members in ſome of them, and the generality in others, being remarkably looſe and diſſolute, in ſo much that they will not do any one good thing but what the love of their ſtipend obliges them to perform.

To conclude this paper, would it be any wonder tho' many Pagan ſtates and rulers, the apoſtate Julian not excepted, ſhould riſe up in judgment againſt the rulers in theſe days? for they extruded and baniſhed players and play-poets out of their kingdoms and ſtates; whereas the preſent rulers ſuffer, yea entertain, ſupport and cheriſh them in their boſoms, until, as vipers, they ſting, poiſon and plague them: and will not the primitive churches alſo condemn the preſent Laodicean church? for the former excommunicated all, both miniſters and hearers, who frequented ſtage-plays, as giving up with Chriſtianity, and renouncing their baptiſm; whereas the latter conniyes at and ſuffers not only the hearers, but deacons and elders, yea miniſters, to perſiſt in countenancing theſe Pagan and helliſh diverſions without a check. "Let God ariſe, let his enemies be ſcattered; "let them alſo that hate him fly before him: as ſmoke "is driven away, ſo drive them away; as wax melt-"eth before the fire, ſo let the wicked periſh at the pre-"ſence of God."

H. I.

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